



PSC NEWS

Missouri Public Service Commission

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FY-06-55

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OCTOBER 5, 2005

PSC GRANTS CENTURYTEL REQUEST FOR COMPETITIVE CLASSIFICATION IN SOME OF ITS EXCHANGES

JEFFERSON CITY--The Missouri Public Service Commission has granted a CenturyTel of Missouri, LLC (CenturyTel) request for competitive classification in some of its exchanges under a new state law (SB 237) which took effect on August 28, 2005.

The Commission granted competitive classification for residential services in the Dardenne, O'Fallon, St. Peters and Wentzville exchanges. The PSC granted competitive classification for business services in the Bourbon, Columbia, Cuba, O'Fallon, St. James, St. Peters and Wentzville exchanges. CenturyTel has 96 exchanges in Missouri.

When CenturyTel filed its request on September 9, 2005, it also sought competitive classification for residential services in the Bourbon, Branson and Columbia exchanges and in the Dardenne exchange for business services.

On September 23, 2005, CenturyTel, the PSC Staff and the Office of the Public Counsel filed a joint recommendation indicating their agreement on the exchanges for which competitive status was appropriate under the law. At that time, CenturyTel also withdrew its request for competitive status for residential services in the Bourbon, Branson and Columbia exchanges and for business services in the Dardenne exchange. The Commission held a hearing on September 27, 2005, to receive additional information in this case.

Under competitive classification, CenturyTel will no longer be subject to price or rate regulation by the PSC. CenturyTel will be permitted to raise or lower its telephone prices at its own discretion, subject to the marketplace. The PSC will retain its ability to regulate quality of service, service termination and other billing issues.

In this case, state law requires the Commission to issue its decision within 30 days of CenturyTel's September 9, 2005, filing. Under SB 237, the 30-day criteria for determining competitive classification is based upon the existence of two other entities providing basic local telecommunications service, one of which may be a wireless provider, the other a wireline company providing local voice service using facilities in which it has a partial or full ownership interest.